

Northern regions' "Super Peak Season" production

Estimates indicate that the northern regions' "Super Peak Season" is likely to occur in the 2024 season.

By Mitchell Brooke

According to the Long-Term Crop Projection Model, the northern citrus growing regions (KZN, eSwatini, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique) are set for significant collective growth in production.

From a combined baseline production of roughly 80 million 15 kg cartons over the last three years, the forecast as projected in Vision 260, indicates the likelihood of 105 million 15 kg cartons being produced by the 2027 season. Projecting the seasons' weekly production by category, trended to the 2027 season and beyond, reveals a notable "Super Peak Season". The "Super Peak Season" is in effect the later production of lemons, grapefruit, and navels that overlap the peak production of specifically Late Mandarins and Valencia citrus types. Late Mandarins

and Valencias in all the northern regions are forecasted to grow exponentially due to the significant number of new orchards that have been planted in recent years.

The conclusion that the northern regions' "Super Peak Season" is likely to occur this season is based on 5 million 15 kg cartons of Valencias and 2 million 15 kg cartons of Late Mandarins being estimated above previous seasons.

If accurate, these estimates suggest extreme pressure on logistics and shipping channels this coming season.

The outlook for the remainder of the 2024 season shows that a recovery in operational performance before the "Super Peak Season" is unlikely, based on equipment shortages and repeated breakdowns.

How to avoid foreseeable related bottlenecks in Durban

1. Export of citrus from Maputo port, with the inclusion of exports to Asia, the Far East, and Southeast Asia. The large citrus crops produced in the Maputo corridor necessitate exports to these regions, for increased traffic in the corridor.

2. Rail of citrus from Hinterland to Durban.

According to provisions for private rail operations in the new rail network policy, Vision 260 projects a demand for 800 more road truck trips by 2027 from the northern regions. As a mitigator, this will require increased raiting containers to Durban.

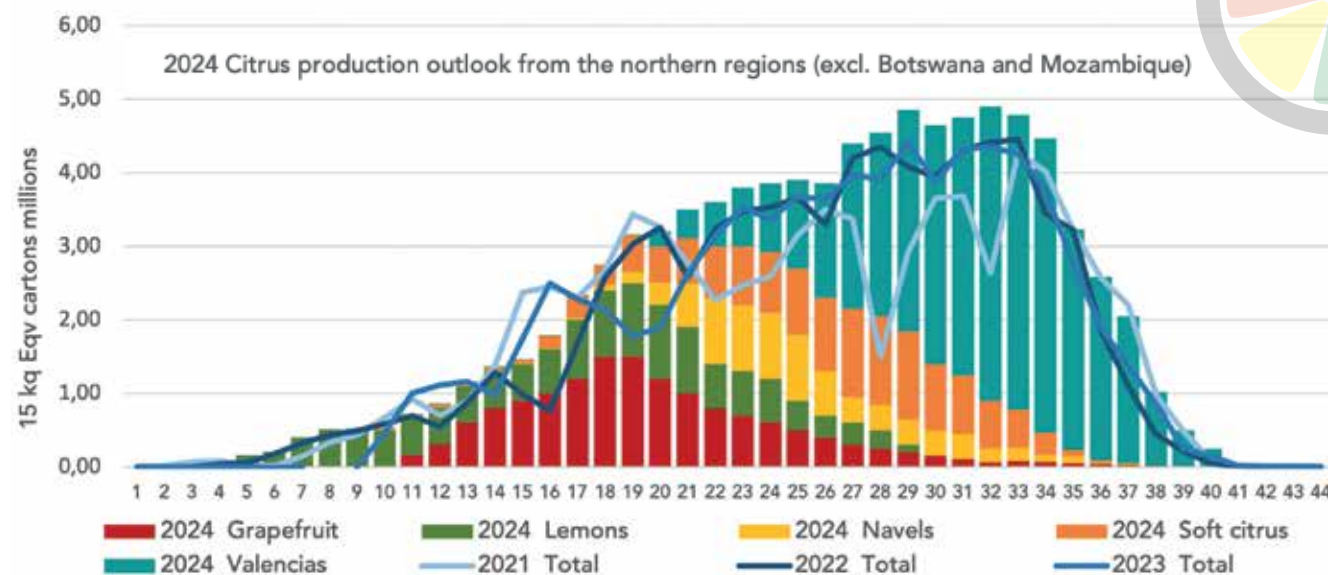
3. Increase the use of specialised reefer vessels to offset the projected increase in container exports from Durban.

Vision 260 forecasts an annual container exports increase from Durban, from 50 000 to 64 000 FEU. The "Super Peak Season" export container weekly average will increase to 3 500 FEU. Predictably, container demand will exceed supply; inadequate Durban ecosystem capacity.

4. Divert citrus from the northern regions to the Eastern Cape and Cape Town ports for export.

Alternatively, transport citrus consignments – expensively – to the Eastern and Western Cape corridors.

The CGA maintains information exchange to help manage the logistics environment.



The 2024 season estimates indicate that the northern regions' "Super Peak Season" is likely to occur this season

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